

The content of the transcript has been edited reorganized for the purposes of correctness and clarity.

Message from Moderator: Welcome to the U.S. Embassy Chat Room! Please enter your question below and we will answer each question in the order they are received.

racheld: i am engaged to a us citizen and want to move to the states to be with him. The wedding is not for 6 months after I hope to get there. Ant suggestions on what visa would be best for me?? I will want to work when I get there.

Con Off 1: *Hi Rachel, thanks for your inquiry today. If you intend to live permanently in the U.S., a K-1 fiance visa is appropriate for your purpose. Generally, your fiance must file a petition on your behalf with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) in his area in the U.S. Once this petition is approved, you may then proceed to apply for an immigrant K-1 fiance visa.*

Con Off: *For further information please visit our website
<http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/sydney/index.html>*

racheld: do I only have 3 months to get married once I get there on a K-1 visa as the wedding is 6 months after I hope to get there

Con Off 1: *You can obtain further information from our Immigrant Visa Department on sydneyIV@state.gov. Detailed information on immigrant visas is also available on our website: <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visas/iv/index.html>*

racheld: my fiance is also in the U.S Army, not sure if this changes anything.

Con Off 1: *Rachel. Please direct your further inquiry to SydneyIV@state.gov and they will be able to respond in detail to your inquiry.*

racheld: Is there a tourist working visa? So I could work as i go, or do I have to have a job to go to??

*Answer: Racheld - To work in the United States on a **nonimmigrant visa**, you must have prearranged employment. For most types of working visa your employer must file form I-129 with the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office. Alternatively, U.S employers find the sponsorship process for E-3 visas easier to complete since they must lodge a Labor Condition Application, but the usual petition required by other working visas is not required.*

racheld: on a working visa, do I need to have employment to go to or can I look for a job when I get there?

Answer: racheld - In advance of applying for a working visa, you may travel to the United States to search for a job or attend an interview under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) if you meet the requirements. Please see details of the VWP requirements on: <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/visawaiver.html>

Fiona: Good afternoon, my husband and I are travelling to the United States for a holiday for 10 days in November 2008. We are both Australian citizens and are eligible for the Visa Waiver Program. However, my husband went to court for a low range drink driving charge in NSW earlier this year, he was given a good behaviour bond and let off with no conviction listed. Is he still eligible for the VWP or will he still need a visitor's visa even though no conviction was listed?

Con Off: *Hi Fiona, as your husband has a drink driving charge he is advised to apply for a visa.*

Ellemeister: If I apply for a 1 or 5 year travel visa and it gets denied how long before I can use the Visa Waiver 3 month visa

Con Off 1: *Ellemeister. If you have been previously refused a visa under section 214(b) you are ineligible for the Visa Waiver Program and must apply for a U.S. Visa.*

Ellemeister: If I get declined for a travel visa will this put a red mark by my name for every time I try to enter the US?

Answer: Ellemeister – If you have been refused a visa under section 214(b), you will no longer be eligible to travel under the visa waiver program.

con off: hi there, how to book the appointment online for the interview for the visa to us?

Con Off: *Hi Con off, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> to apply for a visa.*

con off: i did, and i went to us consulate today , they said to me that i have to book the appointment online first, but i could not find a number to call to making the appointment

Answer: Con off - Applicants must first book an appointment for interview online via our website at <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/niv.html> using the "VisaPoint Service" under the heading "Part Three: How do I apply?"

Zeljim: I am have been married to a US citizen for the past 16 years, 10 years of which we lived in Australia. I went to America last fall on a visitor's visa because I plan to travel back and forth to visit my children and new grandchild. We are retired and on a small pension so the time and expense of getting a new green card is too much since I am only visiting back and forth. The problem arose when I applied to have my visitor's visa extended. We called the proper 1-800 number before the visa expired, explained our situation and they sent us forms which we filled out and sent in with the fee, again before the visa expired. We then received a reply that the visa could not be extended. After a

great deal of research we discovered for the first time that because I came in on the Visa waiver program, that visas under that program could not be extended. I will be returning to Australia for a visit soon and would like to know what I should do to obtain a proper Visitors visa that can be extended? Thank you.

ConOff3: *Zeljm, please email AmVisa@State.gov with your situation specific question*

Michael O: Afternoon - i have a few questions for my wife who is an Australian permanent resident and Canadian citizen - last year she travelled through the usa and got a transit visa she wants to travel back to see her sick grandma and attend a wedding in Canada but transit visa was only for one year she was told she has to go to Sydney and present for interview and get another one - is there another way - its only because she got probation as a 16 year old and a \$100 fine for minor offence as 24 year old 16 years ago

Answer: Michaelo - Individuals who have been arrested for, or charged with, a crime must apply for a visa before travel. They cannot use the Visa Waiver Program. This includes all drink driving related arrests and charges. For more information and FAQ's, please refer to <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/criminalRecords.html>. At your visa interview, a consular officer will determine whether or not your contact with law enforcement makes you ineligible for a U.S. visa. Should you be found ineligible for travel to the United States, there is the possibility of a waiver recommendation to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The recommendation for a waiver is at the discretion of the interviewing Consular Officer and will be based on your offence(s). This process entails requesting permission from USCIS to allow issuance of the visa. Verification of this waiver can take some weeks, and that you will need to provide details of your conviction in the form of court records and a National Police Certificate based on a fingerprint check. Be aware that it is your responsibility to obtain these records should they be required.

Michael O: con off do we get answers here or can we email an address - im interested as i said before in transit visas and not having to attend another interview and all the costs of going from gold coast to Sydney

Con Off: *Hi Michael O, please email AMVISA@state.gov for specific queries.*

lyn: I am keen to work on the super yachts, but i need to be employed before i can apply for a B1/B2 visa. How can i get employment before getting a visa. Isn't this a catch 22?

lyn: I have been working in Canada and travelled through USA to get to the Caymans where i had employment. Does being in Canada count towards the 90 days for Visa Waiver

lyn: If i have been to Canada on work visa and travelled into the usa during that time, then worked in the Caymans and then back to usa then back to Australia, does my time in Canada and the caymans count as part of my 90 days

Answer: lyn - Under the VWP, time spent in Canada, Mexico, and adjacent islands counts towards the maximum of 90 days stay allowed under the program.

lyn: I want to work on the super yachts out of Ft Lauderdale. It appears a catch 22 as i have to get a B1/B2 visa, but need a job before i can apply for the visa? Is this correct?

ConOff3: *lyn, you may apply for a B1/B2 to work on yachts without having a specific job offer, but this is the exception. You will have a greater burden of proof.*

lyn: Thanks, what do you mean a greater burden of proof?

Answer: Lyn – Basically, it is the responsibility of the traveler to demonstrate that they are eligible for the visa classification for which they are applying. For a B-1/B-2 visa we generally recommend that the applicant provide evidence which demonstrates that he or she:

- *Has a residence abroad which he or she does not intend to abandon*
- *Is coming to the U.S. for a definite temporary period*
- *Will depart upon the conclusion of the visit*
- *Has permission to enter a foreign area after his or her stay in the U.S.*
- *Has access to sufficient funds to cover expenses of the visit and return passage*

For further information regarding the visa application process, you may wish to email our Visa Information unit at amvisa@state.gov

maya: i am nepali citizen and i am now in Australia can i apply for student visa for august?

Answer: maya - An applicant has the right to apply for a non-immigrant visa at any U.S. consulate abroad. It may be harder to qualify for a visa when applying outside your own country of permanent residence.

maya: can i only show that i have enough money in my bank in nepal and i 20 from the university and my academic certificates and apply for the student visa?

*Answer: maya - A **temporary visitor** will need to supply documentation to establish that he or she:*

- * Has a residence abroad which he or she does not intend to abandon*
- * Is coming to the U.S. for a definite temporary period*
- * Will depart upon the conclusion of the visit*
- * Has permission to enter a foreign area after his or her stay in the U.S.*
- * Has access to sufficient funds to cover expenses of the visit and return passage*

maya: my girl friend is in usa and she is nepali citizen in student visa. Can i marry her here in Australia and can i go along with her in dependent visa recently after my marriage?

maya: i want to go to the usa in visitor visa with my nepali passport from Australia and marry my girl friend who is currently holding student visa which expires after 4 years. now can i stay there as dependent of my wife?

Con Off: *Hi Maya, once you are married you may have a case for a dependant visa. Please visit our website for further information*

maya: my brother is in usa and he is in diversity visa and currently employed, he is ready to sponsor me for my study there. now can i get a student visa if i apply along with my i20, academic certificates and my brother's sponsorship letter?

maya: my father is sponsoring me to study in usa for every expenses. can i apply for student visa with his bank balance certificate and my academic documents? do i have to prove his relation with me that i am his son?

Answer: maya - At your interview you will be required to demonstrate that you have strong ties to a residence abroad, that you are a serious student, that you are able to pay for the first 2 years of your education, and that you will return overseas after your visit to the U.S.

michael: If an E2 visa is issued to an Australian Citizen under the Treaty Trader provision, and the person travels to work in the United States, and gets married to a US citizen, what has to happen in order to renew the E2 visa back in Australia. Is any other documentation required?

Answer: michael – please email amvisa@state.gov regarding E2 visas and your specific situation

smw: hi there i am interested working living in the US i have vacationed there several times, and would like the opportunity on working/living, i heard about the new working holiday visa

Con Off: *Hi SMW, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for an entire range of work visa options. Should you have specific queries, please email amvisa@state.gov*

smw: Thanks Con off i have read it but I want to know specifically if any company can sponsor me? What are the costs for the employer and can I working more than one job once there?

Answer: smw - to work in the United States you must have prearranged employment. For most types of working visas your employer must file form I-129 with the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office. Once the petition is approved by USCIS it is faxed to the Consulate nearest your residence and you should be notified by your employer. You can then apply for your work visa by making an appointment for

interview at the U.S. Consulate. For more information on working in the U.S. please refer to our website: <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/visawork.html>

smw: Also what is the visa that I am looking for is it a J-1 but i hear that it cost more

Answer: smw - for more information on the new Student Work and Travel Pilot Program, please refer to <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visas/niv/studentwork-faq.html>

dmarkovski: hi, i am hoping to travel to the USA and work overseas for a couple years. what is the best visa to get and how do i go about this?

Con Off: *Hi dmarkovski, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for information on how to apply*

dmarkovski: how to i get over to work in the usa without a sponsor?

ConOff3: *dmarkovski, thank you for your interest in working in the US. In general, you will need a sponsor before you can work in the US or a job offer from an employer.*

dmarkovski: if i have a job offer from an employer, does that mean that they wouldnt have to sponsor me?

Answer: dmarkovski - to work in the United States you must have prearranged employment. For most types of working visas your employer must file form I-129 with the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office.

For certain seasonal work such as ski resorts, summer camps or as au pairs, there are some opportunities under the Exchange visitor visa (J-1) program. For more information please see our website: <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visaexch.html>. The E3 visa is a visa available to Australian citizens for which a USCIS petition is not required, but a Dept of Labor certification must be filed by the US based employer.

jt: Good morning, I am in the us on an E1 Visa with my family (australian citizens). I have a questions about my sponsor. What if I am made redundant at my employment? (economy is pretty bad at the moment) What options do I have? Can the visa be transferred to another company? how long can we stay in the US after being made redundant if it happens?

Con Off: *Hi JT, once in the US, you are responsible for maintaining your visa status. Please visit www.uscis.com for specific details.*

jt: *Thank you, I appreciate your help*

teylah: hi, I am an australian citizen and would like some directions on how to make an appointment with the us embassy for a tourist visa.

Answer: teylah - to schedule an interview appointment, please use the VisaPoint service at <http://aus.us-visaservices.com/Forms/default.aspx>

robyn: I have a BA and MED and I am applying for positions at US Universities. However, I am getting feedback that I need to have a visa or work permit BEFORE I apply. I know I am eligible for the E3 but this needs the job offer. Is there any other means for me to get permission to work in the US.

robyn: I have a BA and MED and currently applying for jobs in the US. Would I be best to apply for an E2 or E3 visa?

Con Off: Hi Robyn, as long as you meet all other requirements, from the info you've given, you seem to be eligible for both.

robyn: What is the current wait time for an interview in Sydney?

Con Off 1: Robyn. The current wait time to apply for a visa appointment in Sydney is 5 days

robyn: Apart from a job offer letter is there any other documentation needed from the employer for an E3 visa?

robyn: What documentation or procedures must an employer provide for an E3 visa?

Answer: robyn - please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/visa-e3.html> for the required documents.

robyn: Hi again, I intend to apply for an E3 visa and need to tell the prospective employer exactly what their commitment is re documentation procedures. Could you please advise.

Answer: robyn - U.S employers find the sponsorship process for E-3 visas easier to complete since they must lodge a Labor Condition Application, but the usual petition required by other working visas is not required.

robyn: I applied for a 2008 diversity visa and haven't heard anything. Does this mean I was not successful?

ConOff3: robyn, you will be informed if your Diversity visa is approved.

robyn: Could you please tell me what documentation is required from an employer with an E3 application

Con Off: Hi Robyn, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/visa-e3.html> for the required documents.

robyn: I applied for a Diversity visa for 2008 / 2009. I haven't heard anything so does this mean that I was not successful?

Con Off: Please email SydneyIV@state.gov for a specific query.

robyn: Any word on the 2008/2009 diversity visa?

Con Off: Hi robyn, please email sydneyIV for specific immigration and DV queries.

m.ellen: Hi, I have a question on F-1 Student Visa. I am intending to start my study in USA in September 2008, but I would like to come to USA earlier than 30 days before the starting date. Is it true that I can apply for B-2 Prospective Visa? Is there such visa? Is the application process the same with normal B-2 Tourist Visa?

tinpang: hey guys, i just received my passport back with my j1 visa approved - the expiry date is 10aug 08 but from what i gather from the consulate website info, i still will have a 30 day grace period after that to travel/get ready to depart?

Con Off 1: Tinpang and M.Ellen. Visitors who intend to enter the U.S. on a J-1 exchange visa are generally permitted to enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the start date of the DS-2019. If you wish to enter the U.S. earlier than this grace period, you will need to apply for a Business/Tourism B-1/B-2 Visa when you apply for your J-1 visa (you can apply for both at the same time.) Visitors on a J1 Visa can stay in the US for 30 days after the completion of the program. F1 students can stay for 60 days beyond the completion of their course of study. Anyone who stays longer than this should have a B1/B2 visa.

tinpang: thanks con off 1 - and just to confirm, there's also a 30 day grace period after the END date of the ds2019 before I leave the states 😊

Con Off 1: tinpang. Those with J-1 visa status may enter 30 days prior to the start date and remain 30 days after the end date of their DS-2019. F1 students may stay 60 days.

tinpang: con off - if you have a b1/b2 visa for 5 years, does that mean i can come and go from the states within that 5 year period (say i visited europe, came back to the states, went to Canada and came back to the states) cheers

Con Off 1: Tinpang. B-1/B-2 visas are multiple entry for many nationalities, however, it is recommended to check the reciprocity schedule for your nationality (this will give you visa details by country). You may wish to email AMVISA@state.gov for a link

tinpang: can b1/b2 visas last for 5 years - meaning you can visit family and friends and tour the states for 5 years?

ConOff3: *tinpang, visa validity periods are the time period over which you can enter and exit the US. The duration of your stay is determined by the immigration inspector at the port of entry.*

m.ellen: Con Off 1 - I am currently in US on VWP visiting the campuses, and plan to apply for the B-2/F-1 visa when I get back to Australia in 1 week. Is it likely that my B2 visa will be rejected because I am re-entering USA so soon?

Answer: m.ellen - we are unable to preadjudicate any type of visa, an officer will determine this at the time of the interview appointment. At your interview you will be required to demonstrate that you have strong ties to the country in which you are applying, and that you will return overseas after your visit to the U.S.

plal: Hello I have question regarding my father's NI visa application that has been in process for last 10 weeks. My mother was given the visa in couple of days. How long it should take to process a simple NI visa. According to wait times, it should take 15 days average and 30 days for complicated cases. I keep getting the repetitive answers that it is waiting on Washington. How long an application should take. He has paid for his flight for tomorrow

Con Off: *Hi Plal, please email AMVISA@state.gov for specific visa queries.*

plal: I have been sending emails to AMIVISA@state.gov.au, I keep getting the same answer waiting on Washington, since I have paid for the flight, If I don't get the visa before 3rd/April I will incur loss of 5K (AUD). 10 weeks is good amount of time to process the visa. Today is a start of 10th week close to 3 months, since I applied for the visa. And I am getting the same old answers. The time taken is much more than mentioned by your sites, why don't you give such information up front that it can take up to 6 months to process a tourist visa. So that people don't get into this painful situation with the consulate or perhaps don't visit U.S at all. My fathers application is so straight forward that it seems like the administration is wasting their valuable time in such cases and missing out on genuine problem cases. I am sure this simple case will be attractive to the media for the time taken.

Answer: plal - The time necessary for approval in individual cases is difficult to predict. We realize that these necessary security measures affect the travel and study plans of some applicants. We will do everything possible to meet the legitimate needs of prospective travelers to the United States within our security procedures and legal responsibilities. We trust that affected applicants understand that this waiting period is necessary as we strive to ensure the safety and security of the U.S. for all citizens and visitors who live, work, and spend their leisure time in the United States. We also do advise on our website and correspondence that "You should never pay for travel arrangements (e.g., airfare, hotels) without having a visa in your possession. The U.S. Consulate General accepts no responsibility if you do so. We are able to issue most visas within two business days of interview; however, we are unable to guarantee the issuance

of a U.S. visa before a fixed travel date. You risk significant financial losses if you ignore this advice.”

alal: I got disconnected that violated the chat rules, just bcas I said things which are true, my fathers application for tourist visa is going for last 10 weeks, close to 3 months. He holds australain permanent residence. My mum was given the visa in couple of days. The application for both of them was exactly the same apart from DOB, name and gender. This application led my family in lot of stress because his flight is on 3rd/april and until now we don't know if he will travel and when the visa will be issue?. The reply from AMVISA is always the same still in process waiting on Washington. My father has no criminal record, has not traveled anywhere apart from Aust for last 20 year.

alal: The question is what can be the max time to process a NIV, and the max time should be published on the web site.

ConOff3: *alal, There is no maximum time for a visa processing time.*

alal: ConOff3 - So how can one find out how long it will take to plan?

alal: Sending again- Since 10 weeks, my parent's have applied for a tourist visa (B2) at Sydney's consulate. They have never visited United States and hold's Australian Permanent Residence. My mother was issued the visa in couple of days but my father's application has been pending for a while. The repetitive response from Sydney's consulate is that it is with Washington DC. How long I have to wait?

alal: I would like to escalate the pending visa application with the superior in your department, how can I do that?

marcus: post your question some more times ALAL. I am sure that will escalate your visa application.

alal: Well I am not getting the answer.

Answer: alal – please direct your inquiry to amvisa@state.gov

NJ: For the E-3 visa, do you require a degree, or is equivalent experience suitable if the job advertised requires a degree?

Answer: NJ - A requirement of the E-3 visa is that the job in the U.S. requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a specialty occupation. The equivalent experience may also be used, if the position for which one is applying would normally require an equivalent amount of experience. Experience of 12 years is considered equivalent to a bachelor's degree.

mikescheetah: hi my is Dorothy and I need help about my passport please

Answer: mikescheetah - If you require information regarding a U.S. passport, please direct these inquiries to our American Citizen Service Unit at sydneyacs@state.gov

mikescheetah: Im also enquiring about a Fiancee's Visa into America

Answer: mikescheetah - please direct Fiancee visa questions to our Immigrant Visa Unit at sydneyiv@state.gov

mikescheetah: Is there any ay I can get an appointment to see someone at The Consulate in Sydney about my passport please

Answer: mikescheetah - please email amvisa@state.gov regarding your specific situation

mikescheetah: when i did my passport 5 yrs ago i didnt put down i had another name.....how can i fix this problem as i wish to go to America and marry my boyfriend

mikescheetah: and i would like to know about been a permanent resident of America once married

Con Off: Hi Mikescheetah, please apply for the visa through the usual channels and discuss your situation with the Consular Officer.

mikescheetah: how do i do that please

Con Off: Hi again Mikescheetah, please email sydneyIV@state.gov for immigrant visa queries.

Con Off: Hi all, anyone interested in Immigrant Visa, please email sydneyIV@state.gov

chen25: I wonder how I can change the visa interview appointment. Is there any webpage showing this information?

Answer: chen25 - To change your appointment date you will need to log back in to VisaPoint and cancel your current appointment before you can schedule a new one. You may only do this up to 24 hours before your appointment. The PIN allows 3 scheduling opportunities so that you can schedule an appointment and reschedule it up to 2 additional times if you need to. <https://aus.us-visaservices.com/Forms/SelfServiceLogin.aspx>

chen25: Sirs, my parents are going to apply for visas in Sydney because they are in Sydney for almost 6 months. However, they don't speak English. Is there a Chinese-English translator?

ConOff3: Any applicant who requires a translator should bring one with them. While we have officers who speak a variety of languages, we cannot guarantee that we would have a translator available for your language.

jordanlim: i'm planning to travel to the States in mid-July. how do i go about applying for a visa?

Con Off: *Hi JordanLim, our website has full details on how to apply:*
<http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html>

jordanlim: ok. would i need to provide my specific dates of travel?

Con Off: *Hi Jordan, you should have travel dates in mind but please do not book travel until you have obtained your visa.*

ADAM: hi i am international student ,study in Sydney and i want to visit the us to see my sister she lives there so what i have to do exactly to apply for us visa and what documents required from me .is it possible to get the visa or difficult by the way i had an american visa before but expired

ADAM: ok i am studying here for 2 years and i still have 3 semester to do .i am working here as a book keeper a very good job and the pay me very good. what strong ties they need from me .just tell me examples and tell me what documents i have to get in the interview

ConOff3: *Adam, you will need to show clear and convincing socioeconomic ties. These ties do not necessarily need to be to Australia, but you should be prepared to make a clear case why you would return from the US.*

ADAM: thanks so much for your help con off3 but still i want to know what documents needed from me as to be ready for any question or any demand from the interviewer

ADAM: please con off3 answer my question as i have work and i have to go

ConOff3: *Adam, what was your question? If I haven't answered it, please email*
Amvisa@state.gov

ADAM: i am asking what documents needed from me to apply for a visit visa as to be ready for any question or any paper asked to me from the interviewer

ConOff3: *Hi Adam, you may apply for a nonimmigrant visa from any country. You must demonstrate strong and convincing ties, however, before you will be eligible for a normal B1/B2 visa.*

ConOff3: *Adam, there are no specific documents required. You will need to prove an intention to return. If you lost your visa as I believe was your case, please bring a police report.*

tapmehta: i am working in US on a H1-B visa. I am visiting my sister in Australia in May. I have a valid I-797 and would like to get my H1-B visa stamp renewed. Will I be able to renew my H1-B visa stamp at the US Consulate in Sydney?

tapmehta: Does the US consulate in Sydney do H1-B visa renewals..I am an Indian passport holder working in US on a H1-B visa. I am hoping to get a renewal visa stamp when I am visiting Sydney later in May

Con Off 1: *Tapmehta. You can apply for an H1B visa at any U.S. Consulate worldwide. If your H1B visa is due to expire you will need to apply for a new one. Visa approvals are never automatic, and your application will receive the same consideration as a new application would receive.*

tapmehta: i am visiting my family in Australia and plan to get my H1-B visa renewed in Sydney during my visit. Would that be evidence of strong ties in the country from which applying for visa renewal (i.e. Australia in this case)? I have a valid I-797 approved till 2011

Con Off: *Hi Tapmehta, we cannot advise specifically on what documentation to supply, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for further details on that visa class.*

Chris: Hi. I applied for a J1 visa in melbourne 12 weeks ago. I still haven't got my visa. Why is it taking so long? I'm an Australian citizen and accepted as a research scholar. Is there supporting info I or my host can provide? How do I know my application has not been misplaced?

Chris: Hi. I applied for a J1 visa in melbourne 12 weeks ago. I still haven't got my visa. Why is it taking so long? I'm an Australian citizen and will be in the US as a research scholar.

Answer: Chris – please email melbourneniv@state.gov regarding your visa application

Chris: I've applied for a J1 visa and apparently I'm under security check. How long will this take and can I provide supporting info?

Chris: After my interview, I was given a 221 g form. Will the con off contact me after hearing from Washington or do I just wait for the mail for my visa?

ConOff3: *Chris, depending on the nature of the 221g. If you were asked for additional documents during the interview, you will need to provide those within 1 year. If you were not asked for additional documents, your case is pending administrative review.*

ConOff3: *Chris, you will be contacted if we need anything beyond what you were asked for at the interview.*

Chris: Thanks con off 3. How long will an admin review take?

ConOff3: *Chris, the length of time varies based on individual circumstances, it may be a short period of time, or it may be a matter of several months.*

Chris: Can my host follow up?

Answer: Chris - Section 222(f) of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act protects the privacy of visa records except in very limited circumstances prescribed by law. Thus we are not able to answer questions or inquiries about specific visa cases except to applicants themselves.

Samuel: I'm an actor wanting to work in LA/New York. I'm an Australian Citizen, how do I go about applying for visa to stay over in the US to work on a permanent basis. thank you

Con Off: *Hi Samuel, please email sydneyIV@state.gov for immigration queries. For work visas, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for all work visa options*

marcus: I will be applying for an A-2 visa as a dependent of my wife. I would like to know if I can apply for a work authorization card before I leave for the USA. Also, how long would it take to process our A-2 visas from the time we submit paperwork?

Answer: marcus - visas are processed usually within 48 hours and returned in the means provided

marcus: can an A-2 visa holder apply for work authorisation card before they arrive in USA?

ConOff3: *Marcus, you will have to wait until arriving in the US to apply for work permission if you are traveling on an A2*

marcus: thanks ConOff3 - any idea of wait time for auth card once application lodged in USA?

Answer: marcus – for information regarding Employment Authorization, please contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – contact details can be found on their website at www.uscis.gov

Michelle: Hello, I'm trying to arrange an appointment time through the visa point internet site as my husband is required to get a visa to travel to the US in Oct 2008. Unfortunately, when I log into the site, it is warning me of a security certificate problem. I'm not comfortable with entering my credit card information into what seems to be an unsecured site - is there another way to make an appointment?

Answer: Michelle – all interview appointments must be scheduled online using the VisaPoint service

Michelle: I've filled in the required form, but can't seem to get an appointment time secured can someone please advise - visa point system is advising me not to proceed as the site has an expired security certificate? Any thoughts?

Michelle: can someone please inform me of the best way to make an appointment - when I log onto visapoint I am getting a warning message advising me not to proceed as the security certificate has expired. My husband has a 15 year old (or there abouts) conviction and I have to arrange a visa.

Michelle: visa point???? is it secure????? Getting a msg that security certificate has expired?????

Con Off: Hi Michelle, VisaPoint is secure, please go ahead.

Michelle: ConOff3 - my query is regarding criminal too - what type of paperwork are you required to take with you to the interview - that is providing I can get an appointment - Visapoint keeps telling me not to proceed as the site has an expired security certificate.

Answer: Michelle – for a list of documents needed to apply for a U.S. visa, please refer to our website <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visas/niv/index.html>

Michelle: Is there a real person you can talk to? I'm not having any luck with the website or the recorded messages 0 I just want to make an appointment to apply for a tourist visa. My husband has a criminal record from about 15 years ago - we have travelled to the US 10 years ago and we weren't even aware that we were supposed to have gotten a visa then! Now we're informed that he needs one and I'm having no end of trouble trying to make the appointment!

Answer: Michelle – please direct your inquiry to our user-pays service at 1902 941 641 or 1800 687 844 ([charges apply](#))

Michelle: what about other convictions other than drink driving - what other documentation is required?

Answer: Michelle – you may need to provide details of the conviction in the form of court records and a National Police Certificate based on a fingerprint check. Be aware that it is your responsibility to obtain these records should they be required.

Michelle: does the visa fee need to be paid prior to the interview? Is this done via Aust post??

Answer: Michelle - Application Fee receipt from Australia Post, currently USD131. Payable by all applicants of any nationality and for all types of visa (except Official

visas). The Application Fee is only payable at the post office, not at the Consulate. Please attach the original receipt to your visa application.

Michelle: thanks conoff 3! will endeavor to make appt now

sanjay089: Hi My name is Sanjaykumar and i am australian permanent resident here i got tourist visa in 2001 for 10 years then after i visited for 2 months in 2002 then i lost my passport in 2006 in Italy so right now i have new passport and i am planning to travel USA in next 3 months so how should i apply ?

ConOff3: *Sanjay089, if you have lost your passport with a prev visa, you will need to apply for a new visa. Please report the loss to your local police.*

sanjay089: i have also informed Sydney office for my lost passport with US visa but i couldn't get any reply. so please advice me how to get visa on my new passport.

Answer: sanjay089 - to schedule an interview appointment, please use the VisaPoint service at <http://aus.us-visaservices.com/Forms/default.aspx>

sanjay089: i lost my passport in Italy in 2002 then i informed by fax to Sydney office but i couldn't get any reply so i don't know whether you disactive my visa or not

Answer: sanjay089 – please email amvisa@state.gov to advise of your lost passport containing a U.S. visa

sanjay089: Con off, could you please inform me if i reapply for visa which i lost, what chances are there for getting same visa

ConOff3: *Sanjay089, we can never preadjudicate a visa. You will need to convince the interviewing officer that your visa was legitimately lost and that you still qualify for a visa.*

sanjay089: One more question Con off, my parents are living in India and in next month they are planning to come here for 3 months. So i would like to know if will they able to apply from here for state visitor visa and also can i appear with them as translator

Con Off: *Hi Sanjay089, please request this from amvisa@state.gov but this should not be a problem .*

sanjay089: Hi Conoff, my cousine brother's wife has appeared for three times and she was refused for visitor visa and once again tomorrow she will attend an interview in melbourne and she is really willing to visit for short stay. I would like to know what will be effective evidence she needs to present for getting visa

Con Off: *Hi Sanjay, each application is decided upon consistent with current US Immigration law. We cannot advise what specific documents to supply.*

sanjay089: Hi Con off, as you said that i need to apply as new applicant for my lost passport with states visa, do i need reapply with same office or can i apply in Melbourne. Does it make any difference for getting visa

Con Off 1: *Sanjay089. Applicants are advised to apply at the U.S. Consulate in their region. Please refer to our website for more info:*

<http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visas/niv/index.html>

sanjay089: thanks

stac: i recently came back to Australia from the us. I travelled on the VWP and stayed 3 months. I want to apply for a b1 visitors visa for 6 months. Am i going to be given a hard time seen as i just returned?

Con Off: *Hi Stac, entry into the US is up to the Immigration officers at point of entry. Please email amvisa@state.gov with your specific situation.*

stac: If i am refused a b1/b2 tourist visa, how long till i can apply again?

Answer: stac – Although there is no specific amount of time you must leave before you can reapply for a U.S. visa, an interviewing consular officer is unlikely to issue a visa unless you demonstrate a significant change in your social, economic, and/or professional ties to your country. To qualify for a nonimmigrant visa, an applicant must demonstrate that he or she has a residence abroad which he or she has no intention of abandoning. Factors such as property ownership, steady employment, and family ties may constitute evidence of such ties.

stac: i have an american boyfriend and want to go and stay with him but don't want to get married right away. I was going to apply for a b1/b2 visit visa. How long can i stay? I just returned from 3 months on the vwp. I don't think i qualify for any other visa?

Answer: stac - -the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables nationals of certain countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and the U.K., to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa, if certain requirements are met. If you do not qualify for the VWP you must apply for a U.S. Visa. Most short term visitors traveling for business or pleasure apply for a B1/B2 Business/Tourism visa

stac: how long is a b1/b2 tourist visa for? I thought 6 months? I have also been told it is up to the customs officer in the us?

Con Off: *Hi Stac, a B1/B2 visa is usually valid for either 12 months or 5 years. This though is dependant on the Consular Officer decision at interview. However, your duration of stay in the country will be determined at the Port of Entry by the immigration inspector. Frequently, B1/B2 visitors are admitted for up to 6 months.*

stac: i am a hairstylist, can a salon sponsor me? it is not a specialty job

Con Off: *Hi Stac, the final decision would be up to a Consular Officer at interview. Please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for all other requirements on working visas.*

stac: i have an american boyfriend and want to go and live with him before we think about getting married. Can i legally live with him on a b2 visitors visa and then return to Australia. How long can i stay in the us for?

stac: will the customs officer decide how long i can stay on a b1/b2 visa? i want to stay as long as possible.

Con Off: *Hi Stac, yes, the length of stay in the U.S. is decided upon by the Immigration Officer at point of entry.*

stac: how long can i stay in the states on a b1/b2 visa. I just returned after 3 months on the vwp. Do i have to have a specific date of departure when i go for my interview? I would like to stay for at least 6-9months visiting friends around the country.

ConOff3: *stac, there is no set amount of time, however, you should be prepared to prove that you are not permanently residing in the US.*

suzanned: I have an enquiry how do I go about getting a visa to work in the USA

suzanned: How do I apply for a visa in the USA and which one is the best for me

Answer: Suzanned - To work in the United States you must have prearranged employment. For most types of working visas your employer must file form I-129 with the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office. For more information on working in the U.S. please refer to our website: <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/visawork.html>

ConOff3: There are many different options for working in the US. For those who already have a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, we recommend the E3 visa. There is also the option for One Year Student Work and Travel Program

beverley: Hi.. how long does it take to be approved for a B2 visa for tourist?

Con Off: *Hi Beverley, from interview, the majority of visas are issued within 48 hours. To apply, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html>*

plal: Beverley it can take 3 months, that what is taking in my fathers situation

beverley: omg

plal: I haven't got the visa yet, still waiting.

plal: The way US consulate operates is very poor, with not much obligation towards the applicants, that's what I have experience so far.

beverley: i already have the ticket booked for 4th of June.. and paid for. if for .. if for some reason.. it does not come thru by the time i leave.. is it possible to go under the three month visa and then wait for the 6 month to be approved?

Con Off: *Hi Beverley, you cannot transfer from the Visa Waiver Program to any other visa. We would suggest you email amvisa@state.gov for an update on your application.*

beverley: thank you

beverley: do i need my passport to attend the interview.. as mine was stolen.. it will take three weeks for the new passport to be issued

Answer: Beverley – please email amvisa@state.gov regarding your specific situation

jadeh: Hi, i would like to work in the US for a year. I know i need a job/sponsor/petition before i can apply for a visa. I just wanted to know if it is common for people to work in everyday jobs or more more common for specialist jobs? As i know the US employer would have to pay for the Petition. Is it likely i can get a job in admin or customer service, as these are jobs that don't require a degree. Also if i can obtain a visa (say H2B) can i change employees at all during my stay?

ConOff3: *Jadeh, if you meet the requirements for the Student Work and Travel Program, this is an excellent option for you. You can see our website for additional info on that: <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visas/niv/studentwork.html>*

jadeh: Hi Conoff3 - I'm not a student, so i doubt i would meet these requirements. Would the best Visa generally be H2b? Or i do have a diploma in fashion, so if i applied for job in this field i could get a E visa?

ConOff3: *Jadeh, thanks for your interest...H2b is a good option for seasonal workers*

ConOff3: *Jadeh, You may meet the requirements for an E3 if you have an equivalent of 4 years degree or 12 years experience or any combination thereof*

jadeh: Con off3 - thanks for your help. Would you say it is harder to get an employer to sponsor you on this visa? Also if i do get this visa, can i change jobs once in the US?

Answer: jadeh - U.S employers find the sponsorship process for E-3 visas easier to complete since they must lodge a Labor Condition Application, but the usual petition required by other working visas is not required.

jadeh: Can you change employers on a H2b or E3 visa? Or would the new employer have to reapply for petition?

Answer: jadeh – once you are in the U.S. you are responsible for maintaining the correct immigration status with U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service (USCIS) www.uscis.com. With advance permission from USCIS, you may change employers.

alal: Regarding my question - "I would like to escalate the pending visa application with the superior in your department, how can I do that?" I have emailed AMVISA, they said superiors don't take public inquiry. So if one want so escalate the matter, how he/she can?

marcus: ALAL. Perhaps they are escalating your question with their superiors as we speak! haha.

alal: Marcus, the question I asked is relevant the superior of the department cannot simply ignore the applicants by not willing to communicate with them. So my question is valid.

marcus: you cannot escalate a pending visa application ALAL. they will contact you with results when they are ready.

alal: Is 10 weeks enough to process NIV?

Answer: alal - the time necessary for approval in individual cases is difficult to predict.

tomas: I (US citizen) have an appointment next week to file the I-130 and g-325 for my Australian wife. Roughly how long will it take for her to be able to work in the US? After we file, does she have to remain in Australia while the application is being filed?

Con Off: *Hi Tomas, any applicant should remain in Australia whilst an application is being processed. Please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for further info.*

tomas: I have been advised from an Australian friend currently working in The States that the waiting period for a work permit (not Green Card) for an Australian citizen who is applying for the Spousal Immigration Visa is 3 months from the time the application is lodged. Is this still the case?

Con Off: *Hi Tomas, please email sydneyiv@state.gov for specific immigration queries*

estercayas: hi i would like to know how my husband can get a us visa while he is assigned in east timor as a unpeacekeeper?

Con Off 1: In general, those wishing to book appointments to attend an interview at a U.S. Consulate in Australia should visit the VisaPoint service at: <http://aus.us-visas.com/Forms/default.aspx>

estercayas: Sirs, my husband is in UN peacekeeping mission in East Timor, will this be difficult for him to get an appointment while he is there. am already a u.s. citizen

ConOff3: Australian citizens who are eligible for the Visa Waiver Program do not need to apply for a visa. You can best determine if you meet the requirements for the VWP by going to <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visawaiver.html>

mmorales: I am travelling to Washington DC on the 1st of June then on the 9th of June I will leave the Usa to Lima Peru, Returning back to Washington on the 30th of June to stay with my family in USA until the 30th of July . Do I need a special visa, or I can just use the waiver visa since I am Australia citizen, with an Australian passport ?.

Answer: mmorales - The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables nationals of certain countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and the U.K., to travel/transit the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa, if certain requirements are met. Under the VWP, time spent in Canada, Mexico, and adjacent islands counts towards the maximum of 90 days stay allowed under the program.

Gloria: Hi There I am an Australian Citizen, I have been made queries via your Amvisa@state.gov.au, and have even called the Sydney number. I would like to know in regards to the new Working Holiday Visa which is for 12 months, if I can have any company sponsor me, or just the ones listed on the Consulate website? Also, once i obtain employment i was told i can change jobs etc? Also what is the cost to the employer? As i know you have to obtain employment before you can leave Australia.

Con Off 1: Gloria. Yes you must obtain sponsorship from an approved program sponsor before applying for a visa. For more information please see: <http://canberra.usambassy.gov/consular/visas/niv/studentwork.html>

jann: My husband is about to apply for the new E3 working visa. Can the letter from his employer in the US offering him the position be sent to us online so we can take that one to the interview?

Con Off: Hi Jann, we often request to see the original document but would suggest you send the online version as well. The decision of the officer to accept an online or scanned version only is made on a case by case basis. The ultimate decision lies with the Consular Officer at interview.

jann: My husband will be applying for the E3 visa - he owns his own Mech Engineering business - does this qualify as a specialty occupation for the E3?

Con Off: *Hi Jann, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for specifics on the E3, and also be advised that the ultimate decision is up to the Consular Officer at interview.*

Lisa: im a new zealand citizen, but my minor children are australain citizens. I want to apply for an employment based visa to the U.S. Would it be best for me to become an australain citizen before I go through the process of applying for a visa to the States

Con Off: *Hi Lisa, any applicant of any nationality is eligible to apply for a visa.*

Lisa: I am a NZ citizen but my children are Australian citizens. I am looking at applying for an Employment Based Visa to the U.S. Would it be better for me to become an Australian citizen before applying for the visa

ConOff3: *Lisa, there are several options available for Australian citizens only, so it may be better to get citizenship, first. However, there are work options available for all nationalities*

Lisa: and despite whichever visa I apply for, do I have to have a prospective employer to sponsor me first?

Con Off: *Hi Lisa, to apply for a work visa, you must have a sponsor first. Please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for a full range of options.*

DAN: Hi I'm only transiting via the US into Canada but returning 3 months later and staying in the US for about a week - Do I need a Non-Immigrant Visa?

Con Off: *Hi Dan, you may well be eligible for the Visa waiver Program, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for more info. Otherwise, you'll need a tourist or transit visa. If the combined stay in the US and Canada exceeds 90 days, you will need a visa.*

DAN: Does it mean that if my entire stay is longer than 90 days but I spend most of my time in Canada and only 1 week in the US (apart from when in transit) I need a B1/B2 Visa?

ConOff3: *Dan, if you exceed 90 days after your entry into the US in North America and will be transiting the US after those 90 days, you will require a B1/B2 visa.*

Lynn: Hello - I am a US attorney representing an Austr. national applying for an E-3. He will need a 212(d)(3) waiver for a very old Austr. conviction. Can he obtain a federal police certificate from the US or will he need to apply for a certificate once he travels to Austr. for the interview?

ConOff3: *Hi Lynn, anyone with a criminal conviction should bring supporting documents for that conviction. For someone convicted of a crime in the US, they should bring US documents*

Lynn: Thank you ConOff3: the conviction is Australian. We hope to take care of as many details as possible before the interview. Out of caution, I think my client should obtain an Australian police certificate in case it is needed at the interview. I'm wondering if he should obtain a certificate from NSW (his former home) or if a federal certificate would work.

ConOff3: *Lynn, yes, if the conviction is Australian, your client will require an astrln police cert*

Lynn: ConOff3 - wow, this is pretty nuts; you guys are brave! Would my client need a police certificate from NSW (where the conviction occurred and his former residence) or a federal certificate? Thanks!

Lynn: (Sending again and repeating that you guys are brave!) My client who has an old Austr. conviction will need an Austr. police certificate to take to his E-3 interview. I'm not clear on the difference between an Austr. federal police certificate and a certificate from NSW where the conviction occurred and my client's last residence in Austr. Can you clarify or advise which he should obtain? Thank you!

Con Off 1: *Lynn. Applicants with a previous criminal conviction are required to obtain an Australian Police certificate based on fingerprints. There is further information on how to obtain this on our website:*

<http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/criminalRecords.html>

Lynn: Where are 212(d)(3) waiver recommendations from the consulate sent for DHS approval before the visa can be issued (in this case E-3)?

Lynn: (sending again) If the consulate is going to recommend approval of a 212(d)(3) waiver, where is it sent for DHS approval before visa issuance (E-3)?

ConOff3: *Lynn, the waiver request is transmitted to the approving office in the US electronically. Most waivers are approved within 2-3 weeks.*

ConOff3: *Lynn, correction, I should have said we receive a response within 2-3 weeks, not always approval*

Lynn: ConOff3 - darn, I liked the first answer better! Thank you!

Lynn: Can any documentation regarding a visa (E-3) or waiver (212(d)(3)) application be sent for review prior to the interview?

Answer: Lynn – all documentation for a U.S. visa application should be submitted at the time of interview, not before.

Winsome: My enquiry is - I keep getting different answers to the same question from various consular officers - my husband needs to get a visa because he had a drink driving charge 32 years ago where he lost his licence for 3 months. He is currently undergoing a hip replacement op as we speak and I am wanting to get an appointment in Melbourne (we live in Albury) as it is only three hours away whereas Sydney is 6 and it would be easier on him if we can go to Melbourne - he has had a fingerprint check done and we are waiting on the report coming to us. We will have all the documents etc to verify return to Australia after our holiday. An official did answer my query to the effect that we could make an appointment in Melbourne but a few days later my email must have been picked up again and I received a different answer to the effect that we would have to go to Sydney because that's the office for the state we live in. Could you please clarify. My other question is that we are taking a cruise from Seattle through the inside passage stopping at various Alaskan towns I was going to use my passport under the VWP but am told that I can only use this if the cruise line is registered for this to be done!? could you also please clarify this questions – thanks

Con Off: Hi Winsome, please email melbourneNIV@state.gov to request an interview.

Winsome: Could I please have an answer to the second part of my question regarding the cruise ship line – thanks

Winsome: We are taking a cruise from Seattle through the inside passage stopping at various Alaskan ports - can I use my passport under the VWP - what's the go with this I was told that the cruise line has to be registered for use - could you advise thanks

Con Off: Hi Winsome, to travel on the VWP, your carrier (cruise operator) must be registered. Please query them specifically.

Winsome: thanks for the info

john: Good afternoon. Just doing this query on behalf of my son who travel to the USA in June - only 3-4weeks - then on to London. He has a recent passport with CHIP Centre Page. Please confirm that no Visa is required. Thank you for your time

Con Off 1: John. Citizens of many countries are eligible for the Visa Waiver Program (including Australian citizens). Generally, passports issued after 2006 comply with this requirement. Please review the other requirements of the VWP on our website to ensure your son meets all the requirements:

<http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visawaiver.html>

Alex: Hi, I'm joint British-Aus nationality, currently doing an MA in the US on an F1 student visa on my UK passport. I'll do OPT when I finish the MA but would like to stay for another year or two. Would I be eligible to get an E3 visa on my Aus passport?

Would my chances of getting one be compromised by having spent 3 years in the US already on a different passport? Thanks.

Con Off 1: Alex. *Once in the U.S. you are responsible for maintaining the correct visa status with the USCIS. Your previous F-1 visa status will impact your application for another kind of visa if you were subject to the 2 year home residency requirement (this is usually annotated on your visa if it applies to you). You may wish to direct further inquiry to AMVISA@state.gov. However, applicants for E3 visa status will generally not be negatively impacted by previous time in the US, so long as their stay was in legal status.*

Alex: Thanks very much.

hamaud: I will be travelling to the states with my husband and daughter in Dec. I am travelling with a Malaysian passport with a US visa. It was issued on the 19 Jun 2003 when we went on a holiday to the US in 2003. The expiration date is 16 Jun 2013. Visa type is B1/B2. Can I use the same visa when I travel this time. Is this a multiple visa as I have travelled in 2003

Answer: hamaud – if you are traveling to the U.S. for a holiday in December and your B1/B2 visa is still valid, you may use this to travel to the U.S. Entry into the U.S. is at the discretion of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the port of entry.

ConOff3: If your question has not been answered, yet, please be patient. If it is not answered within a few minutes, please resend it. As you can see, there is a lot of interest in this chat!

ConOff3: You may also email AmVisa@state.gov if you are not able to find the answer on our website.

psharma: i wanted to attend my cousin wedding in usa but i was refused b2 visa saying i needed more evidence... is an employment confirmation from my current employer enough

Con Off: Hi PSharma, each application is determined at interview. Please be advised that if you do apply again, we will give your application every consideration consistent with current U.S. law.

psharma: how long do i have to wait til i can apply again

ConOff3: Psharma, you may apply for a new visa anytime after a refusal, however we advise you to wait until your situation in life has changed and you can demonstrate clear and convincing ties.

psharma: my sister, granddad and aunty will be travelling with me if i get the b2 visa and in the application it asks if there are any family members travelling with you...i will be the only one travelling on b2 visa do i include them too.

Answer: psharma – please answer all questions on the application documents (ie DS-156, DS-157, DS-158) with as much information as possible.

stevetous: where can i found out about what food products are permitted through airport customs as part of checked luggage?

Answer: stevetous - Information about importing/exporting goods to and from the U.S. is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), part of the Department of Homeland Security, and is separate to the U.S. Consulate. Information on customs is available from the CBP website at: www.cbp.gov

stevetous: I am visiting friends in US & Canada, they are asking for some Aussie food product to be brought over for them?? I don't want to go to US custom at airport and have it confiscated....Where can I find out what's permitted ... it'll be via checked luggage...I've seen the 3-1-1 info.... help please.

Con Off 1: Stevetous. Please refer to the Customs and Border Protection website: <http://www.cbp.gov/>

emclare23: hi guys. i am a travel agent who is leaving the country on the 11April, flying directly in to LA from Brisbane and has just told me that he was fined for drink driving over twelve months ago. Can he enter the US on the visa waiver program or does he require a visa?

Con Off: Hi Emclare23, any applicant with a drink drive conviction is advised to apply for an interview.

ConOff3: emclare23, anyone interested in traveling on the vwp should review the requirements carefully. In general, applicant's with a DUI within the past 3 years will be required to be in possession of a visa and to see our panel physician prior to issuance. Anyone with 2 DUI's in their life has the same requirement.

aly: i would like to go back and join my fiancée in america and wanted to know how to do it

Con Off: Hi Aly, please email sydneyIV@state.gov for a full range of immigrant visas.

aly: can i go to the us on the visa waiver program and get married to my fiancée and then apply for a visa whilst remaining in the US?

aly: Conoff can i get married to a US Citizen whilst I am on a visa Wavier program

ConOff3: Aly, to determine if you are eligible to travel on the Visa Waiver program, you may travel. Getting married on a B1/B2 is permissible, but you must have clear intentions of departing the US. You may not adjust status on the Visa Waiver Program.

ConOff3: *the best way for a fiance to travel to the US to get married is on a fiancée visa, K1.*

aly: i have traveled twice in the last year to visit my fiancée but was told that I was not able to marry him on a Visa Wavier program.....I want to be with him and don't want this to be a drawn out process...what would be the fastest way to be with him...legal of course

Con Off 1: *Aly. You may enter the U.S. on the Visa Waiver Program for short stays of less than 90 days(and you may marry during this time). However, if you have entered the U.S. on the VWP, you must depart within the 90 day admission period. You cannot switch to any other type of visa and you cannot extend the 90 day admission period if you have entered on the VWP. If you intend to marry and live permanently in the U.S. and your spouse is a U.S. citizen, you should apply for an immigrant visa.*

aly: so u are saying that i can go on a VWP but cannot stay and submit a change of circumstance document or something to that effect to actually stay back in America with my fiancée and put in my paperwork from there?? Do I have to come back to Australia and submit the paperwork from here.....Is there a way to stay with him and file the papers from there.

ConOff3: *Aly, That is correct, you cannot adjust status if you travel on the VWP*

aly: So once again....sorry 😊 so the best way for me to get to be with my fiancée is to apply for the Fiancée K1 Visa?

ConOff3: *Aly, yes, the K1 visa is the best option for you as an intending immigrant*

aly: Thanks a lot guys 😊

Vaz: What kind of security checks take place before one receives a visa?

ConOff3: *Vaz, our goal is to facilitate legitimate travel to the US while maintaining secure borders. In order to achieve that goal, a variety of procedures are in place. For obvious reasons, we are not able to comment on any specific aspects of the process.*

Vaz: Thanks ConOff3. The reason I am asking is that my work is possibly offering me a secondment to the US for 6 months, but I believe there may be an issue with a drink-driving charge relating back to 2000 for which I was never formally charged. I want to know if something such as this could jeopardise the possibility of getting a visa to work over there as it would obviously be a major inconvenience to not only me but the company.

ConOff3: *Vaz, anyone who has a drink driving conviction within 3 years or 2 in their life will be referred to our panel physician. The physician will make a determination as to any ineligibilities.*

Vaz: The physician's role therefore is to ascertain whether you are of sound character and unlikely to re-offend? Is that correct?

ConOff3: *Vaz, the phys will determine if you are ineligible to enter the US due to a likelihood of harming yourself or someone else.*

Vaz: Thanks a lot ConOff3, this has been very helpful.

hmead: Hello, my husband (Australian citizen) and I (British citizen) will be spending 8 days in America in December. My husband is not valid for visa waiver. How soon to our departure do we need to apply for his visa? Thank you.

ConOff3: *hmead, we advise you to apply for the visa well in advance of the travel date, particularly if there are criminal convictions or any other ineligibilities. However, you should make sure that the visa will not expire before the travel dates.*

susanshears: I am the holder of a green card and I left the States in Jan of last year unaware that I couldn't leave for more than 12 months. I have a daughter who is a US citizen and my husband also has a green card. Can we go back to live?

susanshears: How do you qualify for a returning resident visa? My husband and I are green card holders but have been out of the States for more than a year... we didn't know. Our daughter is a US citizen.

ConOff3: *SusanShears, please email SydneyIV@State.gov for any questions about immigration visas or returning residents.*

susanshears: ConOff3, I tried emailing but they couldn't answer me.... would we qualify for a returning residents visa or do we have to submit our application to find out?

ConOff3: *Susanshears, specific questions will have to be referred to them, they will answer all emails within a week's time. In general, you would have to prove that your time outside the U S was beyond your control if you exceeded the allotted time.*

mustafa: hi i would like to take visitor visa for USA what can I do?

Con Off 1: *Mustafa. Most visitors who wish to travel to the U.S. for a short stay for business or pleasure apply for a B-1/B-2 Business/Tourism visa. For further information on how to apply please refer to our website:*

<http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visas/niv/index.html>

Carlyt: I am a US Citizen residing in Australia and want to submit the form 1-130 to apply for my husband's green card before we travel to the States. The USCIS website which the form links to from your website details changes to the petition saying all forms should be submitted to the Chicago Lockbox. It says any forms that do not go through the

Chicago Lockbox will be rejected. There is no mention of overseas applicants. Can you please advise where I should submit the form?

ConOff3: *Carlyt, any questions regarding immigrant visas should be addressed to SydneyIV@State.gov. They will be happy to assist you.*

kezza: can I get a copy of this transcript when we have finished.

kezza: where can i get a transcript of these conversations. they go so fast I can't keep up with it all

ConOff3: *Kezza, we will be posting the transcript at a later date.*

kezza: if i want to go to america to work do I have to have to have a job there before I go. I am a hairdresser

Answer: kezza - To work in the United States you must have prearranged employment. For most types of working visas your employer must file form I-129 with the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office. Alternatively, U.S employers find the sponsorship process for E-3 visas easier to complete since they must lodge a Labor Condition Application, but the usual petition required by other working visas is not required.

kezza: is there a US consulate in Hawaii

Con Off: *Hi Kezza, Hawaii is part of the United States, so there is no US Consulate there.*

kezza: I live in country Victoria. can I go to melbourne for my interview

Answer: kezza - Residents of Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory, and Tasmania should apply to the Consulate General in Melbourne. Please schedule an interview appointment online via <http://aus.us-visaservices.com/Forms/default.aspx>

bknkck: do i need a passport from us if i want to work in au

bknkck: do i need a passport from us to work in au

Answer: bknkck – could you please email amvisa@state.gov with further details of your travel plans. Once received, we will try to provide further information regarding this matter.

Con Off: *Hi all, for anyone who has not had their query answered, please ask again. Apologies for the delay.*

Con Off: *For any specific application queries, please email amvisa@state.gov*

Paul: I am travelling to Canada under the WHP visa which is valid for 24 months, however the US VWP last only 90 days, what option do I have after 90 to enter the US for a temporary visit which I may make over the 2 year period

ConOff3: *Paul, if you will be transiting the US more than 90 days after your initial entry and will not have left North America, you should apply for a B1/B2 tourist visa*

Paul: If I was were to find employment under the B-1/B-2 can change the status to another Visa

ConOff3: *Paul, you should apply for the visa class that meets your purpose of travel. If you intend to work in the US, you should apply for a working visa, however, you may go to the US to interview on a B1/B2.*

Paul: If intend to work in Canada for up 12 to 24 months and if possible work in the US, I don't have a sponsor employer what options are available ? or am I better off with the B-1 B-2 Visa. What I am also trying to avoid is not being allowed into the US after the 90 day limit on the VWP while I working in Canada.

ConOff3: *Paul, yes, you should apply for a B1/B2 in your situation.*

Paul: thanks

lilia: Hi, i have a question. My friend is a university student in Australia. But, he is holding China's passport. He wants to visit me this summer because I have a break before I go to pharmacy school. He has already booked appointment for interview. I am wondering what kind of documents he has to bring to the interview. Do I have to provide him my information too?? what kind of information? thank you!

Con Off: *Hi lilia, all applicants need to prove that they have strong ties outside the U.S. Please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for further information on this and all other Non Immigrant regulations.*

lilia: Hi, Con off! thank you !!! I have already checked that website. I understand that he has to show that he has strong ties to Australia. But. do I have to provide any information about myself.. such as my green card, passport, or a copy of my bachelor degree? anything will improve the chance?

Con Off: *Hi Lilia, the main applicant is the only one that needs to supply evidence. If your evidence supports this, please also bring it to interview.*

batguano: I have an interview for an L1B visa, and for L2 for wife and children. Do I pay the Visa Application fee for everybody, or is there just the one payment for USD131?

ConOff3: batguano, every applicant for a visa needs to pay the MRV application fee at Australian post.

ConOff3: The fee needs to be paid at Australian post, if you are approved, there may be an additional issuance fee, depending on your specific circumstances.

batguano: OK. do we pay the Issuance fee now as well?

Con Off: Hi Batguano, you would pay the issuance fee after your interview if your visa is approved.

batguano: completing the DS-156 form: Q33. my two children will go to elementary school. Is that Studying? we don't know what school, because we won't know which school district we will live in

Answer: batguano – attending elementary school is considered studying

sebfowler: Hi, I am planning to apply for an E3 visa. You mentioned earlier a 4 year degree. Would a 3 year degree and a few years experience be enough?

Answer: sebfowler - The attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States. However, a combination of work experience and education may qualify.

Syed: Hi, may i know how do i apply for a visa for USA if i am going there on a business trip. i hold an indian passport. where can i get the forms?

ConOff3: Syed, you must have a valid visa if you are not eligible for the Visa Waiver Program. Indian passport holders are not eligible for the VWP. Please see our website for info.

Syed: conoff3: Thank you

kanby003: Hi, any available funds requirement to apply for a b1/b2 visa? If so, bankstatement is enough? Thanks

Con Off: Hi Kanby, there is no specific financial requirement for a B1/B2, please bring as much evidence as possible.

kanby003: Thanks for your answer, Con Off, I have another question, only one return envelop is required if both my wife and I are going to apply for the visa since we live together right?

Con Off: Hi Kanby003, one envelope is fine if your applying together. Ensure you explain this to the Consular Officer.

aimy: i have a canadian work permit valid for 2 years. i plan on visiting the US at various times during my stay in canada. do i need to apply for a US visa, and if so which type?

ConOff3: *aimy, you will need a US visa if you will be transiting the US and not leaving North America for more than 90 days.*

aimy: i have an australian passport, machine readable, issued in 2003. however it's not bio rhythmic. does the waiver program apply?

Answer: aimy - Passports issued in Australia after 1984 are usually machine-readable. A machine-readable passport will have 2 lines of data running along the bottom of the biographic page. The biographic page is usually the first page in your passport with your photo and personal details. Please refer to http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html to see an example of a Machine Readable Passport (MRP)

hamaud: Sorry if I have already asked this but I think I am lost. I am travelling to US with a Malaysian passport with a visa issued on the 19 Jun 2003 when we went to US in 2003. The expiration date is 16 Jun 2013. Visa type is B1/B2. Can I use the same visa this time. Is this a multiple visa

Con Off 1: *Hamaud. A U.S. visa is valid for entry to the U.S. for the period of time indicated on the visa*

Thomas: I'm in the US under a Visa Waiver. I just got offered work with an employer, can I apply for a working visa/immigrant visa?

ConOff3: *Thomas, you cannot adjust status if you traveled on the Visa Waiver program. You can apply at any US Consulate or Embassy.*

Thomas: And what will I need to apply for if I'm wanting to go over and work but do not have any sponsors, thank you

Answer: Thomas - To work in the United States you must have prearranged employment. For most types of working visas your employer must file form I-129 with the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office. Alternatively, U.S employers find the sponsorship process for E-3 visas easier to complete since they must lodge a Labor Condition Application, but the usual petition required by other working visas is not required.

penny: Hi, what validity is required to be remaining on a visa when entering the USA for a visit

Answer: penny - the expiry date of the visa is the last date that you may enter the U.S. but bear in mind entry into the U.S. is always at the discretion of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the port of entry.

hoangluu: Hi..I am living in Canberra. Can I have the interview there when apply for the visa

Con Off: *Hi Hoangluu, your nearest consulate that can process your application would be Sydney. Please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for details on how to apply.*

Maree: What is the recommended minimum amount of savings suggested for getting set up in the US?

ConOff3: *Maree, there is no recommended amount. You must be able to prove that you will be able to support yourself for your intended length of stay.*

davidw: Hi more than 15 years ago I had a drug trafficking charge and it has since cleared I have applied twice to enter USA and been denied. because of this charge. Now that 15 years have passed and I have been married to a USA citizen for 4 years now and have a son together that is USA citizen will I ever have a chance of going over to USA with her on a non immigrant visa?/Con Off

Answer: davidw - we are unable to preadjudicate any type of visa, an officer will determine this at the time of the interview appointment. At your interview you will be required to demonstrate that you have strong ties the country in which you are applying, and that you will return overseas after your visit to the U.S. Individuals who have been arrested for, or charged with, a crime must apply for a visa before travel. They cannot use the Visa Waiver Program. This includes all drink driving related arrests and charges. At your visa interview, a consular officer will determine whether or not your contact with law enforcement makes you ineligible for a U.S. visa. Should you be found ineligible for travel to the United States, there is the possibility of a waiver recommendation to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The recommendation for a waiver is at the discretion of the interviewing Consular Officer and will be based on your offence(s).

apple: my girlfriend is in usa with nepali passport and currently holding a student visa with validity of 4 years. can i go to usa in visitor visa and marry her there and get a dependent visa?

ConOff3: *apple, you may apply for a visa if you wish, but would have to prove your ties and your intention to return.*

Answer: apple – once you are married you may have a case for a dependant visa. Please visit our website for further information.

apple: my father is ready to sponsor me for my total expense in usa for my bachelor study. can i apply for student visa with his bank balance certificate and my academic documents and his sponsorship letter only?

Con Off: *Hi Apple, please visit <http://sydney.usconsulate.gov/consular/niv.html> for the full list of required documents.*

Answer: apple - At your interview you will be required to demonstrate that you have strong ties the country in which you are applying, and that you will return overseas after your visit to the U.S.

Con Off: *Hi Apple, for a full range of immigrant options, please email sydneyIV@state.gov*

apple: my brother is in usa with diversity visa and he is job holder .he is ready to sponsor me for my expense in usa to study? do i need to prove his relation to me? do i need to show other financial documents ? i am currently in australia with student visa. can i apply for student visa?

Answer: apple - At your interview you will be required to demonstrate that you have strong ties the country in which you are applying, and that you will return overseas after your visit to the U.S.

apple: i have enough balance in my bank account in nepal. i want to apply for f1 visa from australia as i am currently holding australian student visa. do i need to show other documents?

*Answer: apple - A **temporary visitor for business or tourism** will need to supply documentation to establish that he or she:*

- * Has a residence abroad which he or she does not intend to abandon*
- * Is coming to the U.S. for a definite temporary period*
- * Will depart upon the conclusion of the visit*
- * Has permission to enter a foreign area after his or her stay in the U.S.*
- * Has access to sufficient funds to cover expenses of the visit and return passage*

peter: my name is peter i am overseas student from egypt i had been here in sydney for 9 month and study in the university i am working as accountant here and i applied for the permanent resident to australia and waiting for their reply .i want to apply for tourist visa to usa as my cousin will marry this may and she sent me an invitation to share her wedding so do u think they will grant me the visa ,,what i have to do to apply and do u think i have any problem will face me

ConOff3: *Peter, the visa decision can only be made at the time of the interview. You will have to prove that you have a residence abroad which you do not intend to abandon. We cannot preadjudicate a visa.*

peter: so what documents i have to show and does they need any paper from me to prove that i am clear in my country or in australia ,how long it will take for the interviewer to grant a visa is it take long time ?

ConOff3: *Peter, most visas are issued within 48 hours. However, it may take longer. No specific papers will be required other than those listed on our website. Many applicants find it helpful to bring bank statements, invitation letters, etc to help bolster their case.*

ConOff3: *Peter, it will be up to you to demonstrate your life situation. Please carefully consider what you may do to bolster your case.*

peter: would you please write to me the site to know all the requirements con off3 thanks

peter: thanks con off3

ray: i'm a citizen of nepal, in order to apply for a US undergraduate student visa from sydney, what are the requirements and what document do i need to show.

Con Off 1: *Ray. If you intend to study in the U.S. you must obtain official notification of your approval from your intended school. More information for students is available on our website:<http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visastudy.html>. Applicants have the right to apply for a visa at any U.S. consulate abroad, however, it may be harder if you are not a permanent resident of the country in which you are applying as you will be provided to show you have strong ties to the country in which you are applying.*

ticq: i will be in sydney just for 1 week ad would like to apply for the E3 visa. Is there any way to fastrack the process so that I can pick my passport up from the consulate when ready rather than waiting for it to be mailed, or anyway to guarantee that it will e delivered within 1 week before I leave (assuming I use express shipping)?

ConOff3: *ticq, we can never guarantee that your passport with visa will be ready in a specific time period. However, most visas are issued within 48 hours. If you are unable to get the appointment time and date you need, please contact amvisa@state.gov*

ticq: if i am already in the US on an E# ad change employer, do I need to leave the US and get a new visa stamp or do i just submit a transfer to the USCIS and i can continue to travel on my old visa once the approval notice has come through

Con Off 1: *Ticq. The E3 visa is a renewable visa and if you are still with the same employer, you can apply for an extension with the USCIS office in your region.*

ticq: if i am in the US on H1B status and want to change to E3 when I change employer, can I finish with my current employer on the Friday and then leave the US on the Monday to go to a US consulate to apply for the E3 or do I have to leave the US and get a new visa stamp for the E3 before my last Friday with my current employer

ConOff3: *ticq, you may not start with the new employer until the new visa is approved, but you do not have to have the new visa prior to finishing with the current employer, so long as you are departing the country.*

ctp: Sorry to hassle you with this one, but I have been trying to call the US Consulate in Melbourne and just get the same recorded msg. It says operators should be available between 2-4pm but after the recorded msg repeats twice it hangs up on me. Is there another number I can call?

Con Off: *Hi CTP, please email melbourneNIV@state.gov with your query.*

Tom: Hi, I am a Malaysian residing in Brisbane. I'm planning a holiday to the US, who can I get in contact with for more information on the application of my visa? Will I have to get in contact with the US consulate in Sydney or Melbourne? There's not one in Brisbane is there?

*Answer: Tom - The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables nationals of certain countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and the U.K., to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa, if certain requirements are met. Under the VWP, time spent in Canada, Mexico, and adjacent islands counts towards the maximum of 90 days stay allowed under the program. Please refer to our website <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visawaiver.html> to see if you meet all the requirements of the Visa Waiver Program. If you do not qualify for the VWP you must apply for a U.S. Visa. Most short term visitors traveling for business or pleasure apply for a B1/B2 Business/Tourism visa. **Residents of New South Wales, ACT, and Queensland** should apply to the Consulate General in Sydney.*

hiaimy: is the full transcript of this chat going to be posted online?

Con Off: *Hi Hiamy, the full transcript will be available online in the next week or so.*

hiaimy: The Visa Waiver Program - US gov sites say machine readable passports are not sufficient - i will need the passport with chip OR a visa. Australian passport hotline says the standard machine readable will be fine - ie the US makes an exemption. Which version is true?

Con Off: Hi Hiamy, please email amvisa@state.gov with a scanned copy of your passport face page for a final answer.

hiaimy: thanks con off - much appreciated

marissa: hi, im about to apply for an E3 interview... what does the US employee have to send me to take to my interview?

Con Off 1: *Marissa. E-3 applicants require their prospective employers to file a Labor Condition Application (LCA) with the Department of Labor. More info on our website: <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/visa-e3.html>*

marissa: right, but as a result of filing out the form online do they need to deliver something to me to take to the interview?

Con Off 1: Marissa. Your employer should send you the approved LCA, which you need to bring to your visa interview.

marissa: thankyou!

james: For an E3 visa, what type of evidence is required to prove demonstrate that the move will be temporary? I do not own property/etc in Australia

ConOff3: James, an E3 visa applicant does not have to demonstrate a residence abroad, however they do have to convincingly demonstrate that they will depart the US at the completion of their legal status.

pree: hi, im an indian citizen married to a american citizen, i have been offered a h1b visa and the petition has been approved, I am on my way to india to attend my interview, do you foresee any problems regarding the fact that I am married to an american citizen?

Con Off: Hi Pree, please email sydneyIV@state.gov for specific Immigration queries.

pree: conoff, i have done that, but they could no provide me with an information

Answer: pree - we are unable to pre adjudicate any type of visa, an officer will determine this at the time of the interview appointment. At your interview you will be required to demonstrate that you have strong ties the country in which you are applying, and that you will return overseas after your visit to the U.S.

kanby003: Thanks, Con Off. An Australia police check is required for a b1/b2 visa?

Con Off: Hi Kanby, only if requested, if you do not have a criminal conviction this should not be needed.

kanby003: Thanks a lot!

syed: my company is sending me to usa for training

syed: do i need to apply for a B-1 visa if i am going for work?

ConOff3: Syed, if you are going to work in the US, you may not do so on a B1 visa. You must apply for the appropriate working visa type.

lyn57: i am going to a conference in Denver May was a green card holder which has expired my current oz passport was issued from Japan in 2004 DO i need a visa

Answer: lyn57 – To answer your inquiry we require further information. Could you please email amvisa@state.gov with details of when your green card expired etc.

tephoe: i filled up ds156 form for my b1/b2 where i gonna be interviewed

*Answer: tephoe - All applicants must appear in person for an interview at the U.S. Consulate General serving their state as listed below. **Residents of New South Wales, ACT, and Queensland** should apply to the Consulate General in Sydney; **Residents of Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory, and Tasmania** should apply to the Consulate General in Melbourne; **Residents of Western Australia** should apply to the Consulate General in Perth. Applicants must first book an appointment for interview online via our website at <http://canberra.usembassy.gov/consular/niv.html> using the "VisaPoint Service" under the heading "**Part Three: How do I apply?**"*

elisabetscott: I have applied for a visitor's visa online, and e-mailed asking to bring the appointment forward. When can I expect to get an answer to my e-mail. Thank you

Answer: elisabetscott - Please allow up to three business days for a response.

Lynn61: I have a Colombian exchange living with us for this academic year that wishes to visit America for a holiday. Her current visa for Australia is a student 571 visa can she apply for a non-immigrant visa.

Answer: Lynn61 - An applicant has the right to apply for a non-immigrant visa at any U.S. consulate abroad. It may be harder to qualify for a visa when applying outside your own country of permanent residence. At your interview you will be required to demonstrate that you have strong ties the country in which you are applying, and that you will return overseas after your visit to the U.S.

Administrator: We would like to thank all of our participants for the excellent questions we received today. Based on the time limitation and number of inquiries, we were not able to address everyone's concerns. However, we will be posting a full copy of the transcripts on our website soon. For further Non-Immigrant visa inquiries, please e-mail AMVISA@State.gov.